

LEECH
C19

CATHERINE
ANNA
ARNOLD
LEECH

MEMORIES OF MOM,
GRANDMA, CATHERINE

From
her family and friends

This is written in December 1998 to acknowledge the life of a remarkable woman who touched the lives of all of those who penned these memories. And to provide some rich stories, chuckles and reflections we can share again and again, either alone or with each other. Collected and lightly edited by her son, Tom, with proofing by Phyllis and graphics help from Leslie Ricci (Tom's administrative aide). Thanks to all who contributed. Enjoy.

CATHERINE MILESTONES

Born at the family farm June 10, 1911

Raised on the farm, with five brothers, on farm between Churubusco and Huntertown

Graduated from Huntertown High School: 1928

Married at farm to John Earl Leech April 4, 1931.
Honeymoon was day trip to Battle Creek, MI.

Family residences:

- Community of Hollywood, near Fort Wayne (1931).
- Moved to Garrett (Houston Street) around 1940;
- 700 block South Cowen Street
- 612 So. Cowen St.
- 606 So Cowen (about 1948).

Gave birth to five children from 1932 to 1944.

Lost husband, John, 1952 at age 43 (she was 41)

Died: April 26, 1994

FROM BOB, BROTHER

The phone call my mother got on a Saturday afternoon when I was 15 years old is one I will never forget.

The phone rang about 1 p.m. and the caller asked if my mother was the only one in the house. This was the message: "Your daughter and son were in a traffic accident near Battle Creek, Michigan. One death in the car that was involved and your daughter and son very severely injured."

My mother just stood there for quite a while, stunned, until we got hold of my dad.

Don had a 1929 Ford and the other car was a 1931 Pontiac. My visit to Battle Creek with our family was very special. Catherine's eyes were blackened and she had trouble remembering things.

She was a very special sister and close to the rest of the family. We spent many Saturday nights playing cards and ping pong with Carl & Nellie, also a great team.

When you lived at Hollywood, near the airport on Road 3, Catherine would take the Interurban and ride to meet Nellie at Fort Wayne.

Catherine loved to pot luck, so would fix sandwiches and go to the woods whenever Esther would come to the farm. Whenever a beau would come to call, Catherine would have me pick up the room extra nice.

I miss Catherine and John as they were part of our family too.



High school graduation photo



Grandma Ott, Grandma Arnold, Catherine, Phyllis



John
&
Catherine



With Phyllis, Tom, Bill, Hollywood 1936



Huntertown H.S. Rainbow Club



Catherine with Lena Siple?



Garrett, Cowen St., about 1943

FROM HER CHILDREN

Phyllis

Mom said when they got married Dad was making \$90 a month and then shortly after came home and said his salary had been reduced to \$50 a month. She said that was a real blow. I don't know if I had been born by then or not.

She loved living in Hollywood, the suburb of Fort Wayne, where we lived until shortly after Tom was born. She did not want to move to Garrett and leave all the relatives who lived so close in Fort Wayne. (And I doubt if she looked forward to being so close to Dad's aunts! She said she found them very critical and hard to please.) I remember when Karen was born and some of us moved in with the Garrisons because of a fire at our house. Mom had a very difficult birth with Karen, so I am sure we stayed with Aunt Myrt and Uncle Jess for a couple of weeks.

At Christmas we'd eat dinner and then we'd be kind of sitting down and relaxing. Mom would say, "I think the kids are ready to open their presents." We knew Mom was the one getting anxious to open her presents as she got more than anybody anyway.

She was a terrible driver! Of course, with five kids in the car, I am sure she had trouble concentrating. I was glad when she sold the car. She seemed to adjust to that decision very well.

We all thought Mom was the best cook! I had to laugh when she helped care for Mrs. Fouch, the local Home Ec teacher. She said she learned a lot about cooking from Mrs. Fouch and how important a balanced meal was! Mom had so many requested recipes whenever there was a

potluck. She was famous for her noodles, baked beans, raisin-filled cookies, pies, potato salad. I could go on forever. She always made Jack two cheesecakes for his birthday -- one to eat and one to take home and put in the freezer. (It never lasted long!) And of course there was Kelly's raisin pie. Ginny had to remind Mom that others of us liked raisin pie also.

Mom had so many people she genuinely cared about -- her kids, grandkids, neighbors, friends, church members. She was always making something for someone or taking Venus or Gladys a piece of pie, or Benny and Joan cookies. She was very distressed as her friends were dying or moving away to live closer to their families. She truly cared about them.

Whenever I visited, she was always ready to go visiting. It didn't matter where we went or who we went to see -- she couldn't wait. We almost always went to Fort Wayne to see Maxine. What wonderful times we had with her!

Mom would tell about when she was dating and she and her fella would come back to the farm. Having five brothers, there were always five sets of muddy boots laying all over the place, plus her Dad's and Grandpa's. Being the only girl was probably not too easy. She loved going to the get-togethers of her one-room schoolhouse. She was probably 75 when they had their first party. I asked her if she was the oldest one there. She said, "No, our teacher was!" She and Bob never missed one after that. Bob is still going but their teacher is long gone!

She loved to play cards. She was playing Uno with the kids, must have been 8-10 of them at the table. She made a wrong play and somebody said "Grandma, you can't do that. You're cheating." And she said, "Grandmas are allowed to cheat anytime they want to." The kids got a big kick out of that.

When Jon graduated from basic training at Fort Knox, Kentucky, Jack and I and Grandma went down for the graduation. Since Jack was an

officer in the Army Reserve, we stayed in housing right in the middle of the base. All day the recruits were marching with their units and chanting their calls or "jodies" as Jack explained the whole story to Grandma. She went to the window every time they came by and got a big kick out of them. (Jack told her not to listen too closely to what they were shouting!) At the reception for Jon's unit, Grandma told his drill instructor that she had been there nearly 20 years ago for her son's graduation (Bill) but things had sure changed a lot since she had been there!

When Jack died, Mom stayed with me for a week before I went back to work. She was a great comfort. Her only advice was to buy a heated mattress pad. No explanation--none needed. I bought the mattress pad and thought of her many times during those cold Michigan winters.

When I retired I spent three months -- September to December -- on a work program at a university that trained students for missionary work. It was a wonderful experience but, of course, I missed my family for that length of time. When I returned, I decided to spend three weeks in January with Mom in Garrett. We had a wonderful time visiting everybody, shopping, going out for lunch, etc. While there I decided to substitute teach at the old high school. Of course she was up at 6:30 every morning fixing my breakfast just as she did for all of us when we were growing up. She was so proud of her daughter, the school teacher -- just as she was equally proud of the accomplishments of each of her children.

It was a miracle that we all went on to advanced education and earned our degrees! When I graduated, being the oldest, there was no money for me to go to college. I worked at the bank for a year (making \$30 a week and paying \$10 a week for room and board) and managed to save \$500 so I could enter nurse's training at Parkview Methodist Hospital (where Karen later went). Because of our Dad's illness, I knew I was needed at home so my education was delayed several years later.

After Dad died, it was extremely difficult for Mom. She had never worked out of the home and some of the jobs she ended up with were very difficult and one boss in particular was downright nasty. With three younger kids at home after Bill and I left, somehow she managed. It says a lot for our parents that we were all blessed with such determination and energy to accomplish as much as we did.

Tom (a.k.a. Tuck) and Leslie

Some indelible memories.

... Mom washing our hair on the back porch, with rain water hand-pumped from our cistern outside
... Constantly putting up and taking down clothes from the backyard clothesline, including bringing in bed sheets frozen stiff

... Her standard cure-all for our stomach-related ailments: into the bathtub for an enema...
Sending one of us down to the basement to bring up a glass container of fruit or vegetables she had canned before

... Catching a cold (a most-frequent occurrence) so off to bed with Vick's rubbed on our chests and warm clothes around our necks

... Making one of our handmade Christmas tree decorative strings, with Mom cooking popcorn and we poking a needle through the kernels onto the string (and also using the same icicles and balky lights, brought down from the attic, year after year)

... Mom appealing to Daddy, when he was clearly seriously ill, to stop smoking, and his vigorously stating his illness had nothing to do with smoking

... Listening to her playing the piano and singing in the living room...

A sample of what Mom's world was like back then -- all in one short period in early 1940. Tom's head meets wall, split, stapled shut. Mom to Sacred Heart Hospital, Karen arrives. Complications, in hospital for two weeks. The house catches on fire (woman watching kids put

clothes too close to furnace). Family members all fanned out to relatives, some to Aunt Myrths, Tom to Don and Lena's (where Don removed the staples in Tom's head). Some time later, Bill gets scarlet fever, house and kids isolated. Daddy has to stay elsewhere and can only talk to us through screen door... Ah, home, sweet home.

When I was a kid, Mom reprimanded me one time. Karen, about 4, was with me and we'd been playing with some neighbor kids. I told Mom what we were up to and told her one of the kids had said "Your sister is sure dopey."

Mom asked me what I'd said back, and I said "Nothing."

Mom said, "If anybody had said that about me to any of my five brothers, they'd have gone after them." She was disappointed in my display of weak sibling loyalty. (Actually I also thought Karen was kind of dopey -- she later grew out of that, with my guidance.)

We listened to the radio a lot. Mom would listen to Stella Dallas and Just Plain Bill as she would do her housework. We'd all listen to the Sunday night lineup, with Jack Benny, Amos and Andy, etc. (And enjoy popcorn or leftovers).

The Judy Canova show featured a skit where Judy and some guy would play old folks sitting on the porch, and drawling "Well, Maw, what do you think?" So I started calling her Maw. Then, we all followed Lil Abner, with Mammy Yokum, so that became her name as far as I was concerned.

Cooking. She could make a meal out of not much and feed a bunch of us, including the frequent drop ins -- the friend Dad would bring home, an impromptu visiting relative, a pal of someone's. On Sundays, we had the big meal in early afternoon -- meat and potatoes of course. Sunday nights she and the other women (if we had company) would whip up a light supper, with a common dish being open-faced hamburgers. Amazing how many she could make with just a thin layer of hamburger broiled in the oven. I assume the grease was absorbed into the half-bun and we gobbled those down with relish (and

ketchup and onions).

When she made pancakes, it was a bit of a zoo around the kitchen table (only special meals were in the dining room). She'd cook up one pancake at a time for the six waiting mouths, meeting special requests (Bill insisted on light, I said medium, etc.). As we each had to wait awhile for our one pancake, it was a raucous occasion (and usually about that time, someone would tip over the milk). One of my friends -- I think Kevin Heupel -- came over to dinner. Later he said he'd never experienced a meal with so much activity going on all the time.

Another specialty that I've never seen anywhere else was the old standby, beans on bread. Then there was the combo of corn meal mush, followed a day or so later with fried mush -- delicious and never matched by anyone else. (Phyllis: We always had mush for lunch on Saturdays, as our Dad ate lunch out.) Raisin-filled cookies, which in later years, she would always have made up for me on trips back home, or occasionally send to California. (None of her daughters proved adept at making those cookies, but Leslie did, so I still get to enjoy them once in awhile.)

As we came home from school or playing, we were often greeted with the smell of some dish she was working on. Baking cinnamon rolls, after rising slowly next to a furnace register, were the most tantalizing. Likewise we knew soup was simmering and it would be our main dish and delicious -- likely her vegetable soup, made from whatever leftovers and a chunk of bony meat as available, or her own brand of chili.

Years later, for San Diego Magazine, I wrote about the world chili competition in Lancaster, CA. In it I noted how I had never found a decent chili since I left home. Until, in East San Diego, I wandered into a local bar, with a sign saying "Homemade chili." Another loser, I thought, but let's have a bowl. It was delicious. I asked the owner where she learned to make chili like that. "Where I grew up, in Elkhart, Indiana."

She always enjoyed going to ball games. Around 1948 I was batboy for Diehl's softball team and

Dad was the announcer. She perched herself behind the backstop toward the Diehl's dugout. She always got a kick out of the character who sat a few places down the row -- Harry Petit. He was incessantly razzing the Diehl's team with the loudest mouth in the place.

One of the guys was at bat and hit a sharp line drive foul ball. It headed right toward where Mom was sitting and unfortunately the backstop screen had a hole in it. The ball went straight through and hit mom on the side of her jaw. Very hard. She was clearly in pain and Dad came down from the announcer's booth and drove her to the doctor's office. She was O.K. but had a sore jaw for awhile.

After Daddy died, Mom had to take on various jobs to pay the bills. A lot of those weren't much fun. One was back across the alley where they had a nursing home in a big house. Part of Mom's job was to clean the bedding, which was often messy as the patients were old and sick. That job always sounded (and smelled) terrible to me, but Mom didn't have much choice.

She worked for awhile at the Squeeze Inn, where one of the owner's people skills were lousy. She had to take a lot of flak from him, which used to irritate me, but not much could be done about it.

It was at the Squeeze Inn where she acquired a nickname that some of the patrons tagged her with. One of the regulars was the legendary high school teacher, O.B. Rose. So my pals, Pat Ridenour and Max Kock, kept razzing Mom about a potential romance between her and O.B. Forever after when I'd see Pat or Max they'd always ask, "How's Rosie doing?"

Mom was riding with Phyllis over to Bob's. The road was icy and Phyllis lost it and the car went off the road. Mom broke her collarbone and for a couple of weeks she couldn't work and was losing some income. I said she should sue Phyllis, so her insurance would pay something, but she wouldn't consider that logical (to me) option. "Just how do you think that would look, if I sued my own daughter." She didn't buy my reasoned

response, "Who cares, sue her!" She didn't.

In the spirit of equal time (and as older sisters are prone to do), Phyllis reminded me about the day we were heading down to the farm, and Daddy let me take a turn at steering the car when I was maybe 14. He would just squeeze over to the door and we'd slide over and steer for awhile.

We were coming around a turn into Hometown and I had the car too far over to the left, and we plowed into another car. Mom, Gin and Karen were in the back seat (Phyllis probably wasn't even there so all she knows is hearsay, usually unreliable). For a moment there was a stunned silence, and then some wailing from the backseat crowd as they'd gotten bounced around a bit. The car was still driveable so we created quite a stir when we drove into the farm.

Phyllis also noted the time Bill as a kid was driving in the same manner, and drove through the lane at the farm. Maybe we inherited some driving genes from our Grandpa Leech -- a scary guy to ride with as he would drive over curbs, miss stop signs, etc. This was all before driver's ed, so this was how we learned to drive. Marla got the same start steering my VW bus on the back roads of Baja.

Mom was walking toward Randolph Street to go uptown one day. As she passed the alley, a woman (or was it a man dressed like a woman?) leaped out of the bushes and grabbed her purse. She was startled and let out a shriek, which caught the attention of Hank Vanderbosch over at Don's filling station. He and a couple of others immediately headed down the alley after the purse-snatcher and caught him. The guy picked the wrong place to make his move. That was a big story in the Clipper that week, and in the family for years.

Mom enjoyed taking in the attractions when she'd visit me in San Diego. On our first trip to Disneyland, it poured down rain and we shared some laughs that the one dry place was in the submarine, under water. She especially enjoyed the tiny Julian museum up in the mountains. They had an old wood-fired stove and the guide, about

Mom's age, was explaining what the features were, except she didn't know some. Mom said, "Well, we had that kind of stove on the farm and that's where we used to ..." So the two of them chatted merrily on.

At the Wild Animal Park, we sat briefly near the entrance waiting for the tram. A young lady came up and sat next to us and she and Mom started chatting. Mom asked her where she was from, and she said she was from a small town in Indiana, named Lagrange. That amazed Mom and as they continued to chat, she said she'd been a student of Mont Arnold. "Can you imagine that?" Mom said.

When Mom was visiting here with Phyllis and Karen, we all, plus Leslie's folks, went to a musical show at Balboa Park. The theater is located under the flight path as planes head for a landing at the airport. When the planes near the theater, all the actors "freeze" until the conductor signals to continue. Mom enjoyed the whole evening, and talked gleefully about how the actors would "freeze" on stage.

In the fall of 1982 she was my traveling companion when I was a speaker on the QEII. (Marla was originally supposed to go with me, but the Falklands War intervened, postponing the cruise from June to October.) This was her first trip (and mine) on an ocean liner and her first trip abroad.

We went onboard the ship in New York and were sitting on deck taking in the boarding activities and scenery. We were chatting with another passenger -- Mom was good at that -- who was British and asked us, "Are you off on holiday?"

Mom replied, a bit puzzled, "Well, no, it's not a holiday. We're going on vacation." (I was chuckling as I knew to the British, holiday meant vacation.)

She was thrilled to meet the actress Ruby Keeler, a fellow speaker, at one of the many social events. Mom's first question to her was "Weren't you married to Al Jolson?" That started an engaging conversation.

For my talk, I put Mom to work. I'd made up

a quiz for the attendees and put her at the entrance passing out copies to everybody. She was the oldest assistant I'd ever had.

She loved going to the afternoon tea, which on the QEII was a big deal. Besides the goodies, many new to her, she enjoyed the piano player and would describe graphically how he could play with the piano jumping around (the sea was often bouncy on the North Atlantic).

On that note, none of the family will be surprised that Mom got seasick. She had an anti-nausea patch behind her ear, but it proved to be marginally effective. So one evening, she headed back to the room solo (as I was off somewhere else), feeling queasy. She made it back, barely in time to start losing her dinner. As she'd messed up the room a bit, she called the attendant, who graciously helped clean up the place. He got her to the infirmary, the ship's doctor gave her a shot, and she was O.K. the rest of the trip. Many others got sick also, including her son on the return trip. (Phyllis: Years later she was asked what her favorite vacation was and she replied: "The trip on the boat.")

On another trip, Mom joined me for a trip to New England where I was working. I picked her up at the airport, we drove away in the rental car, and after about five minutes, she suddenly said, "Better pull over." Knowing some history, I quickly did so and Mom leaned over and threw up. "I knew I shouldn't have had that hamburger at Baer Field, but Max kept saying I should eat something."

I'd had many enjoyable journeys by train, so Mom and I went from Garrett up to Chicago on the B&O for a couple of days visit. I figured we would have a leisurely breakfast on the way up, spend the night, take in the sights and have supper in style in the elegant dining car on the way back.

We got on the train at the Garrett station, settled in and then strolled to the dining car. We put in our orders, sat back to watch the countryside go by, and waited for the food to arrive. And waited. And waited. I think it finally arrived near East Chicago. And was lousy. Mom

kept saying, "What do you suppose they're doing?" We were about the only customers and my inquiries of the waiter were met with an "Oh, yes, I'll check" and no action. Mom said maybe our orders of oatmeal and French toast were too complicated.

We had a good time in Chicago, with Brian joining us for supper that night. After the disastrous breakfast, I had scrapped any plans of eating in the dining car on our return trip, so when Brian invited us over to his apartment for dinner, we quickly accepted. And we got a good home-cooked meal there. (It's in the genes.)

Leslie adds

Whenever she came to visit us we tried to introduce her to new types of food -- especially Mexican. She would always say "I don't think I like that."

Tom would ask, "Have you ever had it?"

She'd answer, "I don't think I have." So, at our urging, she would try and she always said, "That's really good! I like that!"

I was never at a loss as to how to entertain her when she would visit here. I always knew I could suggest SHOPPING and she'd be at the door rarin' to go.

She was really fun to giggle with. We were out one afternoon and stopped at a restaurant for lunch. A group of bikers parked outside and when we left, we teased her about jumping on the Harleys and taking off with a Hells' Angel in a leather jacket. We all got the giggles from that image and it provided a lot of yuks throughout the entire visit.

The California climate was perplexing for her. Coming from a cold region, she couldn't believe she'd need sweaters in San Diego. Even in summer, we get chilly at night and in Spring and Fall, it can be downright bone chilling. Catherine discovered that and she always had to borrow our sweaters when she came to visit -- even in the middle of the summer.

Our dogs decided she was their favorite whenever she was here. Having dogs as house

pets was not something Catherine was used to. Muffin, in particular, really liked her. One day, she offered to take Muffin for a walk. Of course, the first thing that happened when they got about two houses from ours was that Muffin pooped. Catherine had gone for the walk without a poop sack. She had to return and even though I offered to go back with her and pick up the mess, she insisted on doing it herself. That became a topic of conversation for the rest of the visit.

One of the most fun visits was when Catherine came with Phyllis and Karen. We had a lot of laughs and ate way too much! I remember the whole gang liked my chile relleno casserole very much.

Catherine was a great sport and always fun to take anywhere. She would go with me when The Forever In Their Prime time Players were rehearsing and the group just loved her. Two ladies in the group -- Pauline and Dorothy -- were from Indiana and wow, did that lead to a bunch of chit chat. My students always asked when she'd be coming back to visit. I think we could have easily found a niche for her in that group. Who knows, that might have led to an entertainment career!!!!

I was always impressed with Tom's excellent relationship with Catherine. They truly enjoyed each other and I always thought he was a terrific son. My family (Mom and Dad) thought Catherine was a super lady. It was always fun to get them all together. We feel very fortunate to have had her in our lives....although it was for too brief a time!

Karen & Kenny

I've known only a few persons who live or lived their lives as cheerfully as Mother did. Her "cup" was almost always half-full compared to the "half-empty" outlook of many who face the unexpected hardships of daily living. She was a positive and shining example for us. Growing up

with five brothers surely helped prepare her for the responsibility of raising five children.

Mother on the outside: pretty, vivacious, shapely and musically-talented. A good soprano voice and could play the piano. Inner person: joyous qualities, with almost a total lack of selfishness and vanity; serving others with visits or gifts of homemade goodies. Conversation and a simple piece of pie were the ingredients to her happiness. The accumulation of "things" meant little compared to people.

Mother adapted well to change, e.g., modern conveniences, such as her "micro-oven" and tennis shoes for walking to town. (She really liked those J. C. Penny tennis shoes Phyllis bought.) She traveled alone on an airplane, saying "Flying is the only way to go."

When discussing the "old days", she usually told stories of family and friend outings or social events. Also the "Great Depression." Being a farmer's daughter and a bride during the depression instilled thriftiness, gardening, food preservation, sewing and careful budgeting (especially when left as a widow with three children under the age of eighteen). Our conservative, Midwestern ancestors were already recycling.

I think one of her favorite possessions was an old console record player. She enjoyed playing old favorites and religious songs.

Mother worked in her vegetable and flower gardens for as long as I can remember, even after age 80. Most summers were spent canning fruit, vegetables, jellies and jams. Beside her neighborly and family gifts of food were small bouquets of her flowers.

For about eight years, Ginny and I had our own traveling fan club. This started when I was in the 7th grade and covered my six years in school, followed by Ginny. We both had close friends in the cheerleading ranks, daughters of Edith Musser. She took Mother to every home and away ball game during that entire time, and that meant a great deal to Mother. She had a lot of such special friends.

Mother mentioned that a gentleman of her acquaintance "took the trip." I asked her what she meant. She said, "He died." At almost age 80, Mother had her first thorough physical exam, including blood tests. The tests were all normal, including cholesterol. The doctor asked, "Catherine, your blood tests are so good, what do you eat?"

Her reply, "Everything."

Ginny & Jim

Memories - Where do you start?

(With the legendary bird story.) When Mother worked at the Squeeze Inn (and she worked there for years and years), she was busily cooking hamburgers for all these people. Karen and I got home and there was the bird -- dead. We called Mother at the Squeeze Inn bawling, and here she was trying to cook hamburgers. I wailed "The bird died!"

She said, "WHAT?" I don't think she gave two hoots about the bird. (Note, from Garrett Clipper, 11/12/98: "When choosing, consider life span of the pet -- some birds can live 60 years." Not in the Leech household.)

(Tom's take. During the evening the bird started clucking and gasping. I checked on it a few times and finally it flopped over and croaked. I went up to my bedroom and was reading when the sisters came back home. When they saw the bird was now among the departed, the wailing began. The moaning and shrieking interfered with my reading so I went downstairs to see what the heck was going on. I guarantee you they wouldn't have been that distraught if they'd found *me* croaked, instead of the bird.)

Mother was always there when I needed a sitter (even dog sitter when no one else would offer). She stayed with Jana much of the time when I went to school for nursing and I'm not

sure who entertained whom more. I couldn't have gotten through school without her help.

Mother's great attribute was her upbeatness. She loved to laugh and share good times with anybody. The only time I really remember her crying was when she was facing cataract surgery and was going to be dependent on someone else.

Of course she loved to play any kind of game and cards. She couldn't contain herself when she had a good hand (no poker face here). A game of Rook just made her day.

Since she didn't drive, her greatest ally was the phone. We used to laugh that the receiver was too hot to handle. She loved to come here because she could call all the Ft. Wayne relatives.

The one thing we all inherited from her was her love of walking. Hers was probably not always by choice but she'd even walk the dog in nasty weather. One of her diary entries says "6 below, walked uptown." Of course she always complained about the sidewalks.

When we moved to Urbana, not once did she complain about our being so far. She thought our trailer was just the greatest thing and would be just right for her.

Her life centered around her family. She went to Jana's ball games faithfully, helped Andrea learn the presidents, capitals, planets in order.

Another trait we've inherited is our ability to talk to people. Mother could have the greatest conversation with absolute strangers (also a Bob Arnold talent).

Jim says her cooking will always be remembered. He loved the homemade noodles and I her bread, raisin pie, raisin cookies, on & on.

Mother taught us a love of music. Whenever I used to stop in, she'd be playing that old upright & singing. Andrea & I took her to a concert at the Embassy, drug her up all the stairs almost to the top and she thought it was wonderful.

Every fall we'd can tomatoes -- unheard of not to can tomatoes. The kitchen looked like a bomb went off when we were done, but she was so pleased. She almost passed up a trip to

California because it was time to can beans.

The thing I appreciate in Mother was her attitude of contentness - the smallest thing would just make her day. She never carried on about what she didn't have, just made the most of what she did. She didn't have riches or wealth, but I know she felt she had all she needed.

Jim adds

Here's how your mother got new steps for her back porch. I think I built the old ones 30 years ago. They rotted out, Bill reworked them, and they rotted some more. Terry's folks were getting some new steps and they were going to throw the old ones away. We decided they would work at your mother's. Lo and behold, one day here down the alley came a tractor and a pickup truck with a set of cement steps in the back. They unloaded them, set them up at her back door and they were perfect. Your mother said that was the greatest thing that ever was.



Grandpa Leech, Jon, Phyllis, Kelly, Mom ~58



Next generation: Jana, Marla, Andrea,
Brian, Sherry and _____



San Diego,
whale-watching
1975



Randolph Street 1962



Kelly & Sue's wedding, 1978



Don, Catherine, Bob ~'78-79



Jack, Catherine, Jon, Phyllis, Kelly, Sue
'78-'79

FROM HER GRANDKIDS

Jon Clark

There are three memories I would like to share with everyone about my only grandmother. The earliest is some forty years ago (almost) when my parents abandoned me along with my brother and sister. They said something about a vacation without three unruly kids. I am still not sure who they were talking about. I recall becoming real homesick and somehow Grandma pulled me through. I remember her talking to me, calming me and reassuring me that I was not truly abandoned by my folks.

Another great memory that comes to mind is in the early 70's when it was determined that the house on South Cowen Street needed a new coat of paint. I am still not sure what prompted it but several dear friends gave up a Saturday one summer to paint Grandma's house. I am not sure that my father ever got over the fact that we used his car to haul ladders (he did not have any ladder racks on top of his car). So here were six high school kids plus Jim Kelham setting off to paint that great BIG house in one day. The feat was completed except for the alley side. The cost to Grandma: One beef and noodles dinner! Her homemade beef and noodles were worth more than a day's hard work (more like play.) She talked for years about that day and what a great time it was. (Kelly's version follows later)

The last treasured memory I would like to share happened May 15, 1991. I was not able to reach my mother to inform her that she was a Grandma for the fifth time so I called Grandma Leech to tell her she was a great Grandma that day. She informed me that she already knew! (I

knew that she was up for sainthood but didn't know she had a direct line with God.) Because no one else knew Jack was born I was quite puzzled. After several minutes of not too coherent conversation of trying to figure out how to make money off the all-knowing Grandmother, I finally discovered that she was talking about her other new great grandchild, Lindsey, Terry and Andrea's daughter, who was born on the same day only fifteen minutes before or after Jack! (So much for the appearance money from that all-knowing Grandma.)

I feel blessed to have had her as my Grandmother--she will always be a saint to me.

Kelly Clark

The shame of not doing my job well has kept this memory vivid for nearly four decades; it is not likely to subside soon. As a small boy, I was painting the trim on Grandma's basement windows. Being a male, I politely but defiantly refused Grandma's offer of instruction; Grandma's polite forbearance left my thin, masculine ego intact.

Later she surveyed my careless work and patiently explained that since the purpose of paint was to protect the wood, I should try to cover all of the bare spots. Lesson learned, I completed the job. I have since then painted many houses, including most of her house. I always recall Grandma's kind lesson delivered without reproach. I hope that I will instruct my children as Grandma instructed me: with patience she honored my freedom and with kindness she redressed my folly.

Maybe Grandma was more immediately insistent with her own children. I can't imagine. She provided respite for my mother by letting Jon and me stay at her house.

For the life of me, I can't understand why my mom would have needed time away from her adorable children. But to us, shuffling off to Garrett was like a week at a juvenile Club Med.

The swimming pool, the corner store, the porch swing and the cavernous hideouts in her odd closets (they were, of course, cavernous then; they seem to have gotten smaller in the meantime). Grandma let us explore the vast world of Garrett. The closet and the city are small now, but then paradise!

(House painting revisited) In 1973, when we learned that Grandma's house needed paint, we loaded up our car with people, paintbrushes and ladders. With Jim's assistance we scraped, sanded, primed and painted 75% of her house in the course of a single day.

Lest the reader think this an opportunity for boasting, the motivation was Grandma and her noodles. We labored rapidly and diligently (having learned to paint well from Grandma herself) for the rich reward of noodles and beef. We did not labor for a paltry minimum wage; we labored for kingly culinary rewards. No doubt she also made us a raisin pie, a batch of raisin-filled cookies, and, for my dad, a cheesecake. Should I ever be honored with a banquet*, I will surely order noodles and beef with raisin pie for dessert. (*Ed: Not likely.)

When I learned that Grandma needed some dead branches cut off of the tree above her roof, I put my chain saw in a duffle bag and started hitchhiking to Garrett. It baffles me to this day why anyone picked me up. But with Jim's assistance, once again, we cut down the branches. Again I don't tell this story to communicate my own goodness, rather I tell it because through Grandma (often via her children, including my mother) I learned that family members gladly help their families. Ginny, Karen and Tuck would all open their homes to me. They had learned the family-thing from Grandma as well.

Grandma, as if by instinct, was a helper. And, truth be told, for all the kindness she so eagerly dispensed over the years, Grandma deserved what little we were able to give in return.

Nigger babies and Cracker Jacks. Can't say 'nigger babies' anymore and that's better. But our time in Karen and Kenny's tiny trailer -- on a lake

with a store filled with treats! -- reminds me of all that is best in this family. Jon, Joy and I spent hours playing in the water, fishing, fighting and eating candy. When they had moved to a new lake, they were still willing to risk their tranquility by entertaining us again. I remember catching and steaming a pot full of lake clams; I was the only one who enjoyed the treat -- lake clams, digestive systems undrained, without butter. But -- here's the Grandma point -- Karen opened her home to us, shared her (modest) bounty with us, gave us the freedom to explore, and quietly communicated her love.

Since those formative vacations the civil rights act has passed, schools have desegregated and we no longer call them "nigger babies." Something gained.

Since then our families have moved further apart, we have lost our innocence, the nuclear family has degenerated, and we only see each other at Christmas. Something lost.

Grandma's story is, make no mistake, also the story of her children and, God willing, her grandchildren and their children.

Just prior to her death, Grandma stayed alert just long enough for me to share with her the dedication in my book, *Philosophers Who Believe*. Paying tribute to my mother and her mother, I dedicated the book to Anna Catherine Leech, Grandma Extraordinaire. I was pleased that I had been able to share with her how much she had meant to me.

GRANDMA

by Kelly James Clark

(at his Grandma's 80th birthday celebration)

G is for those great raisin pies that Grandma makes.

R is for the rapacious desire she has for making those great raisin pies.

A is for all those raisin pies that Grandma makes.

N is for the next raisin pie that Grandma makes.

D is for those delicious raisin pies that Grandma makes.

M is for more raisin pies that Grandma makes.

A is for all those other things we remember Grandma for.

Joy & son Keith

Every summer I would spend a couple of weeks with Grandma. While I was there, we always went to Lake Webster for two or three days. Every morning Maxine, Sylvester, etc. would take me down to the beach to swim. Then on to tennis, great lunches and dinners and more swimming in the afternoon and evening.

While I was at Grandma's house she always had some reason for me to go to Williams' store to get bread or milk. There was always an extra nickel or dime to get some candy. When I was too young to go by myself, she would walk me down to the Garrett pool and wait for me while I would swim. Then we would take the nice walk back to her house.

At night there was also popcorn or ice cream, and we would sit out on the beloved front porch enjoying the porch swing. It was great fun watching the cars and people go by -- the best location in Garrett!

You could always count on having your favorite baked goods on hand when you were at Grandma's and you always knew there would be cookies in the container on top of the refrigerator. She would comment she made them several days

ago but no one ever turned them down.

Phyllis: Keith was about three years old and sitting in the front seat of the car between Grandma Clark and great Grandma Leech. He looked at Grandma Clark and said "Grandma?" and then at Grandma Leech and said "Grandma Too?" From then on Grandma Leech became "Grandma Too" to the whole Clark clan.

Marla Leech

One time, summer 1990 I believe, I'd gone to the music festival near Grand Rapids and had sold tie-dyes with a group of friends. At the festival it had rained for days and all of our clothes, tents, etc, including many of the tie-dyes had gotten wet and hence filled with the lovely aroma of mildew.

After the fest we loaded all the gear, clothes, etc. into the van and began the long drive back. One of our first stops was at Kelly's house, and our second at Grandma's. We drove to Garrett where Grandma greeted the three of us, all wearing some form of tie-dye as we hadn't had a chance to do major laundry yet. At that point my friends appeared quite hippied out, shall we say, perhaps me as well, in tie dyes, mildewy ones at that, driving up in a van full of tie dyes and looking pretty scraggily.

Grandma took one look and started laughing that particular laugh of hers and said something like "Oh, Lordy, look at you girls", and immediately directed us all to the nearest laundromat (perhaps the only laundromat) in town, not that she cared about how we looked! She could just sense it was a needed venture.

After we did some loads, we came back to Grandma's where she'd cooked us all a homemade meal, green beans and maybe some baked beans and bacon or ham, and I believe some of those raisin filled cookie things which I've never really fully appreciated as much as my dad, something about cooked raisins. Anyway, of course it was delicious, I think even Bill was there as well.

Grandma asked us about the festival, the weather in particular and how we fared through it all. We talked a while, then watched some TV. She caught me up with family stories, gossip, and other items. Then we all went up that tiny staircase to go to bed (except Grandma who slept downstairs).

The next day we all sat on the porch out front, drinking tea or something, and Grandma told my friends and me little stories, gossip if you will, about the surrounding neighbors or their kids. Some "crippled" boy across the street fell out of his wheelchair out front of his house or something like that; some troublesome kids next door always getting in some mess or other; some neighbor this, some neighbor that. Occasionally, someone would walk down the street and Grandma and the person would exchange hellos, then Grandma would turn and whisper a story about that person, always some funny little tidbit.

She also told some embarrassing moment that had happened to someone in church that week. She'd tell the story, then chuckle and laugh. My friends got a big kick out of it all. Grandma also told us about whom she'd been visiting that week, usually one of the people residing at the rest home, the one she had that nickname for that for some reason I can't remember today, the one she also always would add she never wanted to be there herself. She always made fun of that place.

Then just Grandma and I took a walk to drop off a book at the library, so she could "show off" (her words) Garrett to me, which meant make fun of what little there was. "Oh yeah, Garrett's a hoppin' today", she would say. She'd point out which stores had gone out of business, which had been there forever, then of course we had to get a shake at the Shake Shoppe.

These activities were similar to every time I visited Grandma: check out the town, check out the pool, hang out on the porch and observe/chat about folks, and go to the Shake Shoppe. We truly liked the Shake Shoppe. My friends were off washing more of the tie-dyes at this time. I think we all stayed one more night, then drove off the next day. It was a short stay, but my friends (and of course myself) had a great time hangin' out

with Grandma.

I remember one time when that storm siren rang and kept ringing, which meant head for cover or something like that I guess. I'd never heard it keep ringing before -- only the short noon bell or occasional test as I recall -- this time it was for real. I'd never experienced a true storm before, let alone the amazing cold that was in Garrett that year. I think I was a teenager at that time.

Grandma heard the siren and very casually started closing things up, and doing this and that, while I panicked, and she told me to go downstairs. We meanwhile, stayed upstairs and did whatever needed to be done. I was down in the basement thinking the roof was going to blow off, or the house be picked up and tossed, having seen such things on TV. I couldn't understand why Grandma was still taking the chance of being upstairs.

Later she calmly came down to join me, and told me to not worry. "Nah" she said, "it's nothin'". I think she chuckled at my nervousness, though of course I tried to hide it as best possible. She was busy doing something the entire time we were down there. Folding laundry, checking this thing out, that thing out.

Eventually, the siren stopped, and we went back upstairs. A bit later Grandma went out to the backyard to check on something out there. I couldn't believe she would even be going outside considering the weather, but she seemed untouched by it all. She was always pretty tough that way.

I think that was one of the two times I was there in the winter. I actually had the idea one day I was going to help Bill shovel walkways. I had to go back in the house after 10 minutes, if that, for fear of dying from frostbite. It was very, very cold! Grandma loved that, she just laughed when I came back. I think that was one of the coldest winters in Garrett, or at least that's what Bill and Grandma told me.

Grandma would walk out and go to the store to buy groceries. I usually stayed home. Once she was cooking something and needed me to go to

the store, I ran the whole way and back, fearful I would freeze in motion if I dared to walk. She loved that too.

Of course, when her friends would call up, they'd get the earful about the granddaughter from California, and my response to the weather. I think they all secretly took pride in their ability to kick my butt in these circumstances. Grandma would tell a story, then crack up on the phone as she told them. I'd just eavesdrop from the kitchen, crack up at her cracking up, and be grateful I was indoors.

Sherry Severson

(See item below from Brian re Lionel Ritchie and the Commodores.)

Brian Severson

As for my memories of Grandma Leech, I always got a kick out of some of her expressions or "funny" ways of saying things. Examples:

- If something caught her by surprise or was out of the ordinary, she would say "Good-Knight." I'm not sure of the correct spelling, but it's not to be confused by the traditional bedtime delivery of "Good Night".
- I vaguely remember the days of Detective McGarrid and the rest of his "5-O" cronies, but what I do remember is that it wasn't "Hawaii Five-O". According to Grandma it was "How-I-Ya Five-O".
- Similarly, it wasn't "Ohio", it was "Ohia".
- It was the late 70's. Sherry, Andrea, Jana and I were listening to music in one of the back bedrooms at the Kelham house. We were jamming to an up-and-coming musical group called "The Commodore's" (led by Lionel Ritchie). Grandma Leech strolled-in and saw the

excitement on our faces (because the 'toons were so cool). She said.... "what are you guys listening to"? We all said,"The Commodore's." Grandma Leech (appearing slightly distraught) responded with....."The Cow Manure's!?"

- Some of my "Favorite" memories are as follows: pumpkin pie, raisin cookies, sugar cookies, raisin pie, beef 'n noodles, home-made dinner rolls, rice pudding, tapioca pudding and macaroni and cheese (not in any particular order)

Andrea (Kelham) Yarde

Grandma stayed with my family after she had cataract surgery for a while when I was in the fourth grade. One of my assignments was to memorize the states and capitols and the presidents in order. I remember after school Grandma and I would go over and over these facts until I got them right. I might not have passed without her!

One of our great pastimes living in the country, was walking to the graveyard and looking for old graves. Grandma, my sister and I were wandering around the graveyard one time when a funeral procession drove in. We didn't want them to see us, so we hid behind the tombstones until the funeral was over.

Staying all night at Grandma's was always a treat. She always had a box of Cracker Jack for my sister and me, and sometimes we would walk uptown and get an ice cream cone at the Shake Shoppe. She also would buy me some little thing from the dime store.

My cousins, my sister and I loved to play upstairs in her big house and hide in the closets and the attic. I remember one particular time when we got locked in the closet and had to yell for our parents to come let us out.

Grandma and I went to stay with Tom one summer for a few weeks before my parents and sister came for a vacation when I was in high school.* Being with Grandma was great. She

always cooked something wonderful, except for breakfast when she made me eat oatmeal every morning.

I was lucky in the fact that I could see Grandma whenever I wanted since we both lived in Garrett. It always amazed me how well she did by herself without a husband and without a driver's license. She was a very strong woman, which I didn't realize until I became an adult with many responsibilities. I think of her often and hope someday I can be as good a Grandma as she was to me.

* Footnote from Tom. On the plane with Mom and Andrea, I looked across the aisle to where they were seated and saw Mom was cackling with laughter. I asked what was going on, and she pointed to Andrea, who had been struggling mightily at length to open the bag of peanuts. That was some tough plastic wrapper.

Jana (Kelham) Teets

My sister and I were fortunate in that we grew up living close to Grandma. She was always there for a big hug and a peck on the cheek. I can remember doing puzzles and playing Old Maid (we would always push the Old Maid card up higher than the rest of the cards for Grandma to chose). Later on it was Uno, Kings on the Corner and Euchre with all the cousins at Grandmas for the holidays.

When Grandma stayed at our house, she would read Peter Wolf over and over and over again to me, as well as listen to all of my made up stories with great enthusiasm. In college we wrote regular letters to each other, which always gave me a good laugh and brightened my day.

When I would come back for a visit, she always had pumpkin pie (my favorite). I guess she had a favorite to make for everyone. I once tried to duplicate her potato rolls - they came out as dough balls. Only Grandma had the touch.

My daughter is named after my Grandma, known to most as Catherine. Although my daughter is Katherine with a "K" for Katie, she is only 6 months old but already full of love and laughter as I will always remember my Grandma.



70th birthday 1981



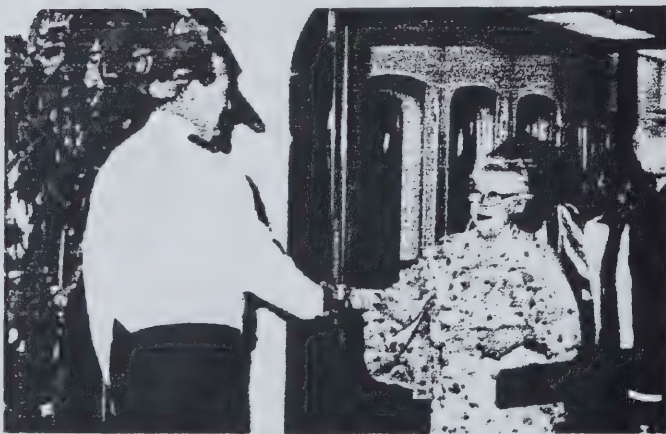
At Mom's 80th birthday 1991



Marla, Andrea, Joy with Grandma



Mom's 80th, with Jon



Queen Elizabeth 2

Photographed in Edward Heath

Meet the Captain night QE2 1982



With another generation:
Keith, Jack, Emily, Kaitlyn, Will

FROM HER RELATIVES

Maxine (Getts) Pierr

Cousin, Fort Wayne, IN

I have many fond memories of Catherine. When I was 12 I was asked to serve the food at their wedding reception at Aunt Lillie's home. I was so delighted.

We spent a lot of time visiting each other's homes, going to ball games, picnics, playing cards and playing ping pong. When David was three years old Catherine cared for Dianne for two weeks while my parents, David and I drove to Florida to visit relatives. By the time we returned, Dianne was calling Catherine "Mom". For a few days it was rather hectic.

While I was a teenager I attended church quite often with Catherine and the rest of the family at Wesley Chapel. After I was married to Sylvester, Catherine and Joy spent a week's vacation with us at Epworth Forest on Webster Lake. Over the years we kept in contact by writing notes and by telephone. Catherine was a great cook and I always remembered how John would compliment her. It was so thoughtful of him.

When Don and Lena got married, Catherine went with them. They had this terrible accident, and, as I recall, Catherine was unconscious for about a month. They didn't think she'd make it, but she came through wonderfully. I used to go and stay with her while she was recuperating. Don was also hurt pretty badly.

We went to Lake Wawassee one summer, when Mr. Baber let us use the cottage. Your family rented a cottage across the lake (at Lake Papakeechee) and we had a really good week together.

I will always cherish my many memories of Catherine.

Eleanor Arnold Lydy

Niece, Fort Wayne, IN

Your mother was very special to me when I became an adult. She was lots of fun and Nellie, she and I had a lot of neat times.

As far as when I was growing up, she was just another adult and you know adults were not part of our world. I remember she made the best macaroni and cheese I ever ate. Always hoped she would bring it.

Thinking about your mother, she certainly was thrifty and got along on very little. Since my father died when I was very small - 7 - I never knew any of his boyhood stories. Grandma always told me that my father was responsible for your mother taking piano lessons.

I have to admire the fact that all your mother's brothers held her on a pedestal and I certainly think that was a tribute to Grandma and Grandpa Arnold.

Dick Arnold

Nephew, Fort Wayne, IN

She was a very, very nice lady, Very personable and just a pleasure to be around. She baked good baked beans for the reunions. Seems as though she once drove, I think -- the car before the Studebaker* -- out to Grandmaws, and left the emergency brake on and didn't know why it didn't run well. I think soon after that, that car was traded for that magnificent Studebaker you had -- the envy of all the relatives. (* A Hupmobile. Phyllis says every car we owned is now extinct.)

She made your house feel very warm, and your Dad also. Well all the Leeches were good

people like that. Just made everybody feel welcome and when they came over, you just always hated to see them leave.

Marilyn Cunningham Wilt

Cousin, Wolcotteville, IN

Catherine was cousin to my mother -- Esther Robinson Cunningham. My most vivid memory is of laughter and good food. We had a great laugh and found much to laugh about in spite of what could only be tough times in her life: loss of her life partner much too early and raising five children alone and suffering through visual difficulties later in life.

She and my mother shared a fun-filled childhood. I loved to hear their stories and know how much they loved being together. They both instilled a love for family as they had experienced growing up.

LaVonne Killian Creed

Niece on Leech side, Laporte, IN

I do know that she was probably the most gracious hostess, that as a child, I admired so much. She was so pleasant, always smiling, eager to please and I loved to hear her laugh. She had a cute giggle, too. She was always so happy to see us, and sometimes it was for a meal. (In those days it was a long distance between Columbia City and Garrett.)

Your mother was a beautiful lady. I truly believe she was a Godly woman, she had the love of Christ in her heart and it showed by all her deeds and actions.

After my mother passed away, I took all the old pictures. There were not many in albums, but boxes and boxes and more just put in drawers. So I separated what I knew to be each family on both sides and still came up with a large box of "Who

is its?"

So, feeling my loss, one day I needed some time alone and decided to take this box of "Who is its?" and go to Garrett and Columbia City. I also had the small boxes of those I knew who they were, to give back to each family.

I went to Garrett first and your mother and I sat on the couch and she identified so many for me. "This one is Margaret as a child, this is Lois, this is Uncle so and so, etc." She was a big help and I wrote on the back of each one who it was. We had a good time thinking about some of our family and our experiences and sat there and laughed and laughed. What a precious time we had that day.

Elaine Landau

Leslie's mother, Lake San Marcos, CA

When asked to add my thoughts about Catherine, my first reaction was she was such a nice, warm-hearted, laid-back person -- the kind of woman one immediately liked at first meeting. We didn't get to see Catherine nearly as much as we San Diegans wanted. I do remember one shopping trip when, at her suggestion, we purchased flannel sheets. She is thought of often on the cool nights when we are cozy and warm, thanks to her advice!

Catherine visited San Diego at the same time another "midwestern mommy" was in town. Mary Lewis's mother's name is Gladys, another lovely lady. Catherine and Gladys had not met before I was scheduled to see Tom and mom. It had been about two years since I last saw Catherine. After a hug and kiss, I enthusiastically asked "How do you like Gladys?"

She looked at me very strangely and said, "Well, I do at times, depending on the situation."

After a moment of shock, I asked another question, "What did you think I wanted to know?"

Her reply was, "You wanted to know how I liked *lettuce*." We all had a good laugh over Catherine's surprise when, after a separation of

many months, my first question would be “How do you like *lettuce*?”

FROM HER FRIENDS & NEIGHBORS

Kenny & Maxine Crow Wolcotville, IN

Your mother, Catherine, was a jolly person. The Crowes had Leeches on the south side of us and then we had the same Leeches on the north of us on Cowen Street.

On wash days, we would use each other's clothes lines if we needed more drying room. We remember one time Maxine was making chile and she got her hands into some hot peppers and they burned her hands. She ran over to your mothers and we covered them with lard to keep the air from them.

Your mother was always willing to watch our children, Dave and Margaret, when we were gone. I remember when Rodney Knisely moved in south of us. He was a cut up. You had a grape arbor over your back wall and the kids would throw the grapes, and Rodney was mashing them on the walk, and your mother gave him a broom and the hose and made him wash the walk. Rodney and your mother were always teasing each other, in fun.

We were neighbors for thirty-six years. Your mother baked the best cookies and now and then

would send some over for us to eat. Yum! Yum! We shared things like neighbors should.

Pat Miser Weimer Garrett, IN

I believe our mothers became friends around 1943 when our family lived across Cowen Street from yours. They remained good friends from that time on, never living more than four blocks apart. They often went on outings together. Mother always drove and Catherine (a good cook) generously remembered my mother with pies or canned goods from her kitchen.

Catherine was the personification of cheerfulness -- that's the first thing I think of when she comes to mind. She had a wonderful sense of humor -- and a cackle that brought sunshine into the room. A visit with Catherine was always delightful.

As much as I enjoyed her sparkling personality, I most admired her for her character. I think she had what my grandfather would call “a tough lot in life.” She had such dignity though, that I wonder if she thought so. She met the challenges of widowhood (with a half-raised family) with grit that was inspiring, as evidenced by taking in boarders or renting out her house.

Compared to her life, my mother's life was one of luxury and ease. Yet Catherine never revealed a scintilla of envy and was always interested in hearing about my parents' latest trip or plans for the next.

I'm sure many family members will pay tribute to her wonderful qualities as a mother and grandmother, but as a non-family member, it's my opinion that Catherine raised the deepest-thinking, articulate and interesting activists in town.* That's quite a reflection on her character. (*Ed: “hear! Hear!”)

Thais Heinzerling Garrett, IN

Your mother and I were both very much absorbed with domestic duties and children and our outside activities coincided not very often. We always met at church -- briefly

One time some years ago now -- but our families were grown and gone -- her name and my name were called at church at a recognition service for the old Girl Scouts Groups. We laughed at each other and shrugged and went up the aisle together and we both said -- we were never Scout leaders OR ANYTHING. Your mother said to me. "But you had all the parties," and we laughed together for being awarded for being supportive.

I enjoyed Catherine's modesty and self-deprecating sense of humor and always had a lift up from just talking with her.

Chuck Davis

Neighbor and former Garrett Mayor
Tucson, IN

Thanks for your letter and interest in what I may say about my recollections of your sweet mother (yes she was). A real nice person.

I would guess that two memories do stand out beyond her patience and determination in raising all you kids after your dad died -- a remarkable woman to do such a fine job of accomplishing that. I am three years older than Bill, so I can remember.

First, even while legally blind in her later years, your mother would always smile and display a pleasant personality to those she met.

Second, Catherine Leech, I am sure, even though a Republican, called for a democrat primary form in the primary for mayor in 1977. She, Mrs. Argubright and Mrs. Hayes all voted in that primary against John Costin for councilman (I think), and consequently (again, I think), voted for me against the party favorite, Wayne Bartels.

Suffice it to say, I liked her and thought very much of her as a mother and person. Bless her heart.

Marilyn Haffner Dawson

Scottsdale, AZ

I remember Catherine as a cheery, upbeat person although she was left a widow at such a young age. The Leech home was always open to the children's friends. There were a lot of ping-pong games played. Single mothers were not as common as they are now. I am sure she had a lot of hardships that we could know nothing about. But she managed to raise the children that were still at home with a lot of love. She was always special to me and I usually saw her at Methodist Church when we visited Garrett.

Nancy Smith Lantz

Garrett, IN

Catherine (we always referred to her as Mrs. Leech, as did most of her friends) was a very dear and caring friend. When she lived at the 507 Randolph Street downstairs apartment (former home of GHS English teacher Marie Thrush), Lawrence Lantz and I, with our 1 year old son, Timothy Lawrence, lived in the apartment above Catherine.

Our second child, Thoma Lynn, born on September 13, 1960, came into this world while we lived at this address. Mrs. Leech was Thoma's first visitor. Being the caring and thoughtful person she was, she brought Timothy a special batch of her delicious cookies, as well as a gift for the new baby and a gift for Timothy. (If memory serves me correctly, I believe that Marla, Tom's daughter, was born about this same time and I recall meeting them while we were living here.)

Many times, Mrs. Leech would watch our two tiny tots so I could take a break and walk to the neighborhood grocery. Her beautiful spirit, gentle laughter, friendly and caring attitude were uplifting to all who came into contact with her. And she NEVER missed a Sunday at the Garrett United Methodist Church!

FAMILY LINEAGE

CATHERINE LEECH ROOTS

Henry & Catherine Mahan Arnold

Montgomery

Nell

Mame

Willard

(George, Catherine's son
killed on RR)

George Ott & Harrier Eyer Ott

Lillia

Lawrence (Pearl Fisher)

Adella, died at age 1

Nelson (Ida Grunewell)

Orpha (Fred Robinson)

Claude (Edna Griley)

Russell , died age 2

Jerry (Effie Perry)

(Susie Bonhoffer)

Anna (Chelsie Kessler)

Nellie (Carl Getts)

Roscoe (Dorothy Hull)

Montgomery & Lillia Arnold (married 1901)

Forest (Helen Larue)

Norma, Naomi, Eleanor, Malcolm, Loren, Ronald, Barbara

George Harold (Lillian)

Elizabeth, John, George, Paul

Don (Lena Sible)

Dick, Duane, Larry

Ralph

Catherine (John Leech)

Phyllis, William, Thomas, Karen, Virginia

Kenneth Robert (Dolores Stonestreet)

Dan, Mont, Lola, Celeste, Sarah

Catherine and John Leech

Phyllis (Jack Clark)

Jon, Kelly, Joy

Bill (Gisela)

Robert

Tom (Leslie Landau Johnson)

Marla

Karen (Kenny Severson)

Sherry, Brian

Ginny (Jim Kelham)

Andrea, Jana

From Mom's book of bridal memories.

(Phyllis sent this to me. I don't recall ever seeing it. Mom's notes in italic, my comments in parentheses)

"John Leech of Fort Wayne, Ind. and Catherine Arnold of Churubusco, Ind. were united by me in Holy Matrimony. April 4, 1931."

Ori C. Bogue.

Witnesses: Ray H. McBride and Esther Robinson.

My trousseau. *Sport dress and jacket. Blond stockings and slippers. Scarf, gloves and straw tan hat. The wedding gown. Blue silk dress with high waistline. Blue beads and handkerchief. Blond slippers and stockings.* (Hmmm. Are these slippers and stocking doing double duty, and what's the mystery behind the switched order?)

Parties. *Shower at Mothers, April 25th, Saturday night. Relatives served ice cream and cake. Shower on Wednesday April 29th at our home, County Farm. About 14 here. Presented us with a picture, brought cake, fruit and coffee. Friday night, May 8th. Young People's Class of Wesley Chapel. Gave many nice presents.*

Guests. *Rev. Bogue, Ray McBride, Esther Robinson, Mr. and Mrs. Don Arnold, Richard Arnold, Mr. and Mrs. Forest Arnold, Norma, Naima and Elnora, Maxine Getts, Dad & Mother, Harold Arnold, Bob Arnold.*

Menu. *Creamed chicken, mashed potatoes, gravy, pickles, noodles, baked beans, bread and butter. 2nd course: coffee, ice cream, angel food cake.* (Does this explain our later menus?)

Gifts: many noted, from wedding guests, plus many others. *From Richard Arnold -- donut cutter.* (Haven't seen too many of those around lately, if ever.)

Our honeymoon. *Went to Battle Creek. Left at one o'clock. Visited the hospital, saw Max Sherrod, Vera Walton, Alma Copeland and Florence Trumper. Returned to our home. Arrived about eleven o'clock.* (That was the honeymoon, up and back. Battle Creek was where Mom had her car crash. Anybody know about this hospital visit?)

At home. *Just arrived Saturday night, April 4, 1931. At home April 5th in green and white bungalow just off Lima Road, 4 ½ miles from Fort Wayne.*

FINAL WORDS

ANNA CATHERINE LEECH 1911-1994 IN MEMORIAM

Kelly Clark

Eulogy at his Grandma's funeral at Garrett Methodist Church
April 29, 1994

I begin to write this as Grandma yet lives and I hope against hope that she will rouse herself from her senseless slumber for a cup of her too strong coffee, just one more game of Rook, and to let us all tell her one last time that we love her and are grateful for all that she has meant to us.

But this is not meant to be.

Grandma was good, steadfast and decent. In this age of praise-inflation these words seem woefully trite and understated. Grandma was neither groovy nor super anything (except, of course, at making raisin pie or raisin-filled cookies and being Grandma). But she was always and without exception good, steadfast and decent. These puny words are the sober truth and are adequate to who Grandma was; I can think of no better.

In her novel *Mansfield Park*, Jane Austen describes three snobbish women of high society who prided themselves on knowing all of the rivers of Russia and all of the kings of England in order; yet, though they had knowledge, they lacked wisdom, goodness, decency and humility. In the end, all of their lives were a wreck. Although Grandma was not of high society, born and raised on the farm was she, and did not know all of the rivers of Russia and all of the kings of England in order, she was wise and good and decent and humble. When Grandma was once asked what she wanted for Christmas, she replied: "Oh, nothing, just give me a box of Kleenex." Grandma's unassuming life was ordinary; but in her life there was splendor in the ordinary.

Grandma was a single mother long before Murphy Brown made it fashionable. It was not a lifestyle choice for her -- her husband died young; it took determination and perseverance to raise five children alone. And she took pride in the accomplishments of her children and grandchildren, attending basketball games, track meets, concerts, and graduations for nearly a score of people over virtually three score years.

I can now hear her cackle of a laugh; we are surely being excessive, she would think, making much ado of nothing. She unpretentiously and with ease always did what was upright and appropriate. For her, there could be no question of doing otherwise. Virtue was strongly in her nature, knit into her very bones. In this dark world getting darker, her unadorned excellence shines like the noonday brightness of the sun. Grandma was unfailingly kind, long suffering yet with good humor, self-sacrificial, hard-working, faithful, and devoted to her family. The values manifested in Grandma's life are considered old-fashioned; God forbid they ever go out of fashion.

As I play with my infant son, Evan, flesh partly of Grandma's flesh and the most recent of her descendants, I hope, for the sake of us all, that these characteristics are passed on from generation to generation. We could hope for nothing better.

From Karen

Mother was a practicing Methodist her entire life and belief in the hereafter (Eternal Life). I'm of the belief that she was greeted in heaven with this:
"Well done, thou good and faithful servant: Enter thou into the joy of the Lord."
Mathew 25.21.

**And here's another page for you to add any further notes
triggered by this collection.**



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